

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Commission Meeting October 14, 2008

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Laurie Jean Hannon at 5:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Thomas Balga, Laurie-Jean Hannon, Walter Heinig, Frank Kruglik, Scott Leamon, Judith McKay.

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director and Carla Pelliccio (Secretary).

Absent: William Carey, Michael Compare and Antoinette Giordano-McKeon.

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Scott Leamon made a motion to accept the Minutes of September 2, 2008, seconded by Thomas Balga.

III. Correspondence:

No correspondence to report.

IV. Director's Report:

Daycare:

Enrollment: Daycare has maintained their enrollment numbers: All slots are filled in the pre-school program (15 spots) as well as in school-age program (30 spots). A waiting list currently exists.

Observation: Two Gateway Community College students are utilizing Daycare as their field placement in order to complete their 30 hours of observation as part of their Psychology coursework. Mr. Sorkin has requested that feedback be provided from these interns at the conclusion of their observation.

Field Trips: The final field trip for summer Rose Orchard took place on September 24th.

Trainings: A training on Staff Resiliency took place on September 17th with an Early Childhood Education consultant, Linda Flach.

Reporting: Monthly daycare reporting to the State of CT Department of Education is now being done online to make reporting process more efficient.

Counseling:

Personnel: During the previous meeting on September 2nd, Mr. Sorkin had identified two strong candidates for the vacant Counselor IV position. He announced that those candidates did not work out and

he has reopened the candidate pool and is re-interviewing candidates. The position is being advertised on Careerbuilder.com, the CT Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the town website, as well as the statewide Youth Services system. The two current clinicians are maintaining the current client case load. They are operating on standby mode for new referrals. The Department still continues to maintain the level of quality of counseling services.

The Harbor Health quarterly audit took place on October 8th. Overall the audit went well. Charts had been reviewed. Only a couple of minor findings that are being corrected, however overall positive feedback was given.

Senior Center:

Senior Center Renovation Grant Proposal: Happy to report that the State of CT has approved the award of \$750,000 grant for the renovation and expansion of the Senior Center. A meeting is scheduled for October 20th with the architect, the Director of the Senior Center, the grant writer and finance staff to see what the next steps will be in the process.

Scott Leamon asked who will oversee the state awarded funds. Finance department will be the point of contact to receive the funds and will be the centralized point for the overall management of the funds.

Activities: Copies of the monthly *Senior Happenings* brochure of activities and events were distributed to each Commission member.

Mr. Sorkin has asked that the Commissioners help spread the word about upcoming event, “*Life Changes and Losses with Alzheimer’s*,” presented by Dr. Alan Siegal, Geriatric Psychiatrist. This free event will take place on October 22nd at 5:30pm.

Youth Services:

Grant: As previously mentioned at the September 2nd meeting, a \$30,000 grant through Workforce Alliance was awarded in partnership with the Board of Education. Monies have been spent throughout the summer months and will continue to be spent throughout the year to place students with special needs in various employment opportunities.

A celebration of all involved in the Summer Employment Program gathered at North Haven High School on October 14th. Representatives from the various work sites were in attendance to acknowledge the great work that the students had done. Certificates of Appreciation were given and several students spoke about their involvement in the program and what it meant to them.

Juvenile Review Board: A meeting took place with Chief DiCarlo, School Resource Officers (SRO), Captain Merrithew, Rev. Scott Morrow and Nancy Leddy to reactivate the Juvenile Review Board. The goal is to divert some of the cases surrounding minor offenses by students from the Criminal Justice System. It is unclear as to what caused the board to become inactive. Cases will be brought to the JRB to determine how it should be handled. Meetings with the offenders’ families will take place in conjunction with the SRO and Community Services members (if necessary). The board will determine what the student will need to do, which may include community services. Chief DiCarlo is currently looking into defining the scope of responsibility that the JRB will take.

The question was raised by Judith McKay had asked whether the student offenses will appear on students’ respective criminal records. Mr. Sorkin will still need to find out further details, however his suspicion is that they will not since this board is to serve as a diversion from the Judicial system.

Community Services:

United Way Days of Caring: The Department participated in United Way's Days of Caring (during the Sept. 15 – 21, 2008) with two projects:

1. Replacement of light bulbs with Energy Efficient bulbs for North Haven Housing Authority Residents. The project covered both housings: Temple Pines and Parkside (70 units total). United Illuminating donated all of the light bulbs. Representatives from UI conducted the replacement of these bulbs and students from North Haven High School's Green Club volunteered to assist. In addition to bulb replacement, faucet and shower head replacement was conducted in all units, in addition to weatherization testing on the units located at Parkside. Energy conservation informational pamphlets were also distributed to each resident. The project took three days to complete.

2. United Way Diaper Drive:

Approximately 1,500 diapers were collected between the three collection sites: Library, Recreation, Senior Center and donated to the various diaper banks.

Free Energy Assistance and Energy Savings Presentation: Took place on October 4, 2008 from 10am-1pm at North Haven Middle School. Approximately 120 people attended. This free event included presentations from: United Illuminating, Southern CT Gas Company, Community Action Agency of New Haven, Clean Energy Task Force, North Haven Community Oil Co-op, CT Housing Investment Fund, 2-1-1 Infoline, as well as representatives from the Tax Assessor's Office, the Water Treatment Plant, American Legion and the North Haven High School Green Club. U.I., the Gas Company and Community Action Agency presented on weatherization and the various programs that are available to any resident who are income eligible, or for a nominal fee. The goal of the event was to inform all area residents of the various programs that are available that they may be entitled to. Exit surveys were collected from various attendees and the overall feedback was quite positive. These results were distributed by Mr. Sorkin to all the Commissioners.

Scott Leamon had attended the event and commented on his overall positive experience. A suggestion was made to have further agency representatives at each table available for residents during the entire event.

Energy Assistance Program: The Department acts as a satellite office for the intake of Energy Assistance applications. Applications are then sent to the Community Action Agency for eligibility determination. Energy Assistance application appointments began on October 1st. Appointments are being handled by three staff members and take place on Wednesdays only. Requests for appointments began on September 15th and are being scheduled daily. To date, sixty-four (64) applications have been processed. Appointments have been booked through November 19, 2008. The first possible oil delivery for residents who have been awarded assistance is November 3, 2008.

Thomas Balga asked how town residents find out about this assistance program. Mr. Sorkin mentioned that many of the local newspapers had printed the press releases, and the program was discussed during the October 4th Energy Assistance and Savings Event. Carla Pelliccio also added that the information is available through the State of CT Department of Social Services website as well as the 2-1-1 Infoline. 2-1-1 directs all North Haven residents to our office if they request further information on Energy Assistance.

Two days have been scheduled to go to the Senior Center to process applications (October 16, 2008 and October 23, 2008). Representatives from Community Action Agency will be going to the center to process these applications. For any homebound residents, the Community Action Agency will arrange visits.

Mini-Grant Award: Community Services applied for and received a mini-grant (\$1,250) in partnership with ACES which will be utilized to hold a community conversation on Early Childhood Education. This

grant is funded by the William C. Graustein Memorial Fund in New Haven and managed by Community Mediation Agency in New Haven. This planning committee will be comprised of approximately 20 people, and invitations will be sent to approximately 100 people. It will be proposed that this event take place in January or February 2009.

Monthly Food Bank Statistics: From this meeting moving forward, Mr. Sorkin will distribute monthly statistics on the activity of the Community Services' in-house food bank (in basement of Town Hall Annex Building). Food is regularly donated by private donations, the CT Food Bank in East Haven. Non-perishable items are collected, and a refrigerator is available to store turkeys for holiday food distribution. Food is given out in eco-friendly bags. Dan Riccio is the point person who oversees the food bank. Residents usually utilize the food bank once a month. They are given approximately three meals for three days for each family member. Several residents who utilize the food bank are current clients of the Department and take advantage of the food bank monthly.

The statistics indicate the number of units or number of meals that are distributed each month. Therefore 261 meals were distributed for the month of September. Mr. Sorkin encouraged the Commissioners to help spread the word to others to donate as well as take advantage of the service.

Laurie-Jean Hannon asked if Community Services planned on conducting a food drive. Mr. Sorkin stated that due to the various food donation that are received from local organizations and schools, a food drive might not be necessary, however if the demand begins to exceed the supply, then he will consider one.

V. Finance Report:

The July 2008 and August 2008 budget reports were reviewed by the Commission. The Board of Finance will be meeting within the next couple of days to discuss September financials. Community Services August 08: bottom line = 14.1% which is under budget.

Senior Center: Certain account lines have not been utilized as of yet, but will be used soon.

Daycare: Current snapshot of Daycare expenditures were also distributed and reviewed.

VI. Old Business:

There is no old business to report.

VII. New Business:

Judith MacKay announced that the North Haven Middle School PTSA is working with the Police Department in planning an internet safety presentation for parents.

VIII. Public Participation:

No people were in attendance.

IX. Adjournment:

Judith MacKay made a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Thomas Balga. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.